

SWAFFHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

together with the

REPORT

of the

SANITARY INSPECTOR

1951
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S T A F F

Medical Officer of Health: Robert N.C. McCurdy, M.B.,
CH.B., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector : D.B. Foxwell, A.R.S.I.,
M.S.I.A.,

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GENERAL STATISTICS

Area in acres	93,216
Population (estimated at mid-year by Registrar General)	8,840
Number of inhabited houses	2,786
Rateable Value at 31.12.51	£25,099. -. -. ,
Product of 1d Rate	£102. 10. -. .

To:-

The Chairman and Members
of the SWAFFHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman,
My Lords, Ladies & Gentlemen,

The Minister of Housing and Local Government in his Foreword to the Second Supplement to the Housing Manual 1949, described the provision of more houses as "the most urgent of all social services". Because I believe that what you do in respect of housing can be of more significance to the health of the community than anything else you do, I propose to begin my Annual Report this year by considering some aspects of the matter.

In my Annual Report for 1950, I use the following words :- "It would be of great help if there were some clearly defined method of selecting tenants for Council Houses. This would help me to give you such information on the present housing conditions and other circumstances of applicants as would be most useful to you and, more important still, it would help to prevent any possible suspicion of favouritism in selection."

It was suggested then that it is not my "duty to tell the Council what method they should adopt in selecting Council House tenants," (a thing I had not done,) but I must point out that it is my duty to report to you all matters which I consider may affect the health of the District - there can be only one judge in that matter.

There occurred on the 8th January 1951 an incident which will illustrate my point.

On that day tenants were selected from a large number of applicants for some new Council Houses. Among these applicants there were ten who lived in almost identical accommodation to one another. Several of these ten worked in or near the Parish in which the new Council Houses had been built; all of them except one, had children, two of them had three children. Of these ten, two were selected for the new Council Houses and one of these two was the applicant with no children.

Because Council Houses are subsidised out of rates and taxes you have an obligation to "secure that in the selection of their tenants a reasonable preference is given to persons who are occupying insanitary or overcrowded houses, have large families or are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions." (Housing Act 1936. Section 85).

The housing conditions of these ten applicants were all equally unsatisfactory. All were occupying equally insanitary houses. You had little to choose between them on either of those scores. Some of the ten had families which, having regard to the nature of the accommodation, might have been considered large. Only one of them had no children.

I am well aware that some of these ten applicants may not have been considered desirable tenants, but why was the only one with no children chosen - unless it were because he was a Councillor's son.

The suspicion that public money is sometimes used to further personal interests is deplorable enough, but there is a more serious aspect of this matter.

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You have a very great responsibility for the mental health, or morale, of the community you represent. I was astonished by the almost complete lack of any protest at the action of yours I have referred to above. I was astonished by it only because I was new to the District, the reason for it was soon obvious to me - this was precisely the sort of action which the community had come to expect of you.

The confidence which people should have in their representatives is not a thing to be lightly flouted.

I wish to make it quite clear that I should have preferred to have discussed this matter in committee, but you have placed obstacles in the way of my doing so. On the 10th of December, 1951 I included some remarks on housing accommodation in my report to the Public Health Committee. These remarks were not considered on the grounds that it was a matter for the Housing Committee, although you had already on the 22nd of October, 1951, virtually excluded me from attending the Housing Committee meetings.

I will end this section by repeating the remarks I made on the 10th of December, 1951 :-

"You will recall that I quoted figures from the Report of the Royal Commission on Population to show that the 3-bedroom house is just the right size for barely 50% of the families in this country. For many, it is unnecessarily large, and for a few it is too small.

In the Social Survey of England and Wales in 1945 it was found that only 30% of existing households needed 3-bedroom houses. The Ministry of Labour arrived at a similar figure in 1947. Both these Surveys were of a cross-section of households - including the unmarried, those still expanding, and the elderly, whereas the previous figure was based on completed families. The actual need for 3-bedroom houses probably lies between 30% and 50%.

The Housing Manual of 1949 recommends that "...The long term housing problem calls, however, for a much greater variety of types of houses; some larger, some smaller than the normal family house in order to meet in a balanced way, the varying requirements of the population as a whole."

Mr. Bevan, in a circular sent out in November 1949, urged local authorities.... "To base their future housing programmes to a large extent on their assessment of the long term housing needs of the district..."

The situation may be summarised by a quotation from 'The Times' of the 9th May, 1951 - "The over-supply of middle sized houses leaves to the present and the coming generations the awkward problem of adapting to the use of small households dwellings never designed for eventual sub-division - too large for single occupation without waste, and too small (or wrongly designed) for effective conversion to multiple occupation."

In 1951 you completed 51 Council Houses. All of these were "middle sized houses" with three bedrooms.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948

No action was taken during the year under Section 47 of this Act.

MILK AND DAIRIES REGULATIONS, 1949
Regulation 20

The enforcement of the provisions of this regulation has not worked smoothly. This is hardly surprising in view of the number of different Authorities sharing responsibility, and of the uncertainty as to the scientific basis on which action is taken.

In one case which came to my notice, a herd of 35 cows had, for sampling purposes, been divided into 7 groups of 5 cows each. The milk from the five cows in each group was mixed and examined for the presence of *Brucella Abortus*. Six out of the seven samples were found to contain *Brucella Abortus*! A week later the milk from all 35 cows was examined individually. *Brucella Abortus* was not found in any of them.

It is well known that *Brucella Abortus* is excreted only intermittently in the milk of an infected cow. Your insistence on the lifting of restrictions at the earliest possible moment is not in the interests of Public Health.

Furthermore, your action on the 17th of September, 1951 subsequently confirmed by the Council, in suggesting to a farmer that he should dispose of three cows known to be infected with *Brucella Abortus*, although you had no power to insist that such disposal should be by slaughter, was incompatible with your duties under this regulation.

Whether in fact these cows were slaughtered is beside the point. You have power under these regulations to protect the public by insisting that milk from such cows should, if it is sold for human consumption, be heat treated indefinitely. You were quite prepared, despite my protest, to see these cows lost sight of by being passed into other hands so long as you could save having to pay compensation for the continued heat treatment of their milk.

It has been suggested that as this infection is usually incurable, the branding of all cows whose milk is found to contain *Brucella Abortus* should be considered.

Although it is not compulsorily notifiable, a case of undulant fever the human form of this disease, was notified to me on the 15th February 1951. It is likely that other cases occur which do not come to my notice.

FOOD POISONING OUTBREAKS

No outbreaks of food poisoning occurred in the District during the year under review.

MEDICAL STATISTICS

As you see, the birth rate has dropped considerably and is now almost as low as the national rate.

The death rate has risen, partly due to the influenza epidemic during the early part of the year, and is now almost the same as the County of Norfolk and national rates. The Infant Mortality Rate has fallen.

There has been no serious increase in the incidence of any infectious disease except whooping cough. This disease caused one death. There has, on the other hand, been a gratifying fall in the number of cases of tuberculosis notified. This disease also caused less deaths than in the previous year.

<u>BIRTHS</u>	<u>Live Births</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
		80	60	140
	<u>Stillbirths</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
		1	1	2

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Population at mid-year, Births, Birthrate, Stillbirths
Stillbirth rates during the past five years

	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Population	7,620	8,075	8,206	8,572	8,840
Births (total)	179	185	152	188	140
Birthrate per 1,000 of population	23.5	22.9	18.6	21.9	15.8
Stillbirths	5	2	2	3	2
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 of population	0.66	0.25	0.24	0.35	0.2
.. per 1,000 total births	27.1	10.7	13.0	15.2	14.1

<u>DEATHS</u>	<u>All Ages</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
		61	49	110
	<u>Infants under 1 year</u>	2	0	2

Causes of death of Infants under 1 year

Cause	Male	Female	Total
Prematurity	1	0	1
Congenital abnormality	1	0	1

Population at mid-year, deaths, deathrate, infant
deaths and Infant Mortality Rate, during the
last five years

	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Population	7,620	8,075	8,206	8,572	8,840
Deaths	90	72	90	83	110
Death rate per 1,000 of population	11.8	8.9	10.8	9.7	12.4
Infant Deaths	5	1	5	7	2
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	27.9	5.4	32.9	37.2	14.3

Deaths from certain selected causes during the last five years (figures as available)

Cause	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Tuberculosis	2	2	3	4	1
Bronchitis and Pneumonia	-	8	10	5	15
Other notifiable infectious diseases	-	0	0	0	1
Motor vehicle and other accidents	-	2	1	9	7
Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	0	0	0	0	0
Cancer	9	11	9	9	16

Deaths according to Ages
(Compiled from Returns Submitted by the District Registrar)

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
Under 1 year	2	-	2
1 and under 5	2	-	2
5 and under 10	-	-	-
10 and under 20	4	-	4
20 and under 30	3	1	4
30 and under 40	2	1	3
40 and under 50	1	1	2
50 and under 60	4	5	9
60 and under 70	13	6	19
70 and under 80	16	26	42
80 and under 90	12	8	20
90 and over	2	1	3
TOTALS	61	49	110

Causes of death at ages above 1 year and below 50

Age Group	Sex	Cause
1 to 5	Male	Pneumonia
	Male	Whooping Cough
10 to 20	Male	Road accident
	Male	Road Accident
	Male	Road accident
	Male	Asthma
20 to 30	Male	Road accident
	Male	Cerebral tumour
	Male	Suicide
	Female	Appendicitis
30 to 40	Male	Pulmonary cancer
	Male	Cancer of colon
	Female	Enteritis
40 to 50	Male	Cerebral thrombosis
	Female	Cancer of breast

Deaths from all Causes
(Registrar General's Short List)

List No.	Cause	Male	Female	Total
1	Tuberculosis, respiratory	1	-	1
5	Whooping Cough	1	-	1
10	Cancer, stomach	-	6	6
11	Cancer, lung	1	-	1
12	Cancer, breast	-	1	1
14	Cancer, other sites	6	2	8
17	Vascular lesions of nervous system	4	10	14
18	Coronary disease, angina	7	3	10
19	Hypertension with heart disease	2	-	2
20	Other heart disease	10	7	17
21	Other circulatory disease	3	4	7
22	Influenza	2	2	4
23	Pneumonia	3	4	7
24	Bronchitis	4	4	8
26	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	-	1	1
28	Nephritis and nephrosis	-	1	1
29	Hyperplasia of prostate	1	-	1
31	Congenital malformations	1	-	1
32	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	7	3	10
33	Motor vehicle accidents	5	1	6
34	All other accidents	1	-	1
35	Suicide	2	-	2
TOTALS	All causes	61	49	110

The following Table compares birth rates, death rates, etc., of this District with those of England and Wales and of the Administrative County of Norfolk in 1951

	England & Wales	Norfolk	Swaffham R.D.
Birth rate	15.5	14.8	15.8
Stillbirth rate per 1000 of population	0.36	0.36	0.2
Death rate	12.5	12.4	12.4
Infant Mortality Rate per 1000 live births	29.6	29.5	14.3
Tuberculosis death rate per 1000 of population	0.31	0.17	0.11
Tuberculosis case rate per 1000 of population	-	0.85	0.34

Infectious diseases notified during the last five years
(figures as available)

Disease	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Tuberculosis, all sites	6	10	15	9	3
Paratyphoid fever	0	0	1	0	0
Scarlet fever	2	2	1	5	9
Whooping cough	2	48	6	34	95
Erysipelas	0	0	1	1	3
Ophthalmia neonatorum	0	1	0	1	0
Dysentery	0	0	0	0	1
Measles	5	46	48	206	20
Poliomyelitis	0	2	0	1	0
Pneumonia	2	3	1	1	6
Puerperal pyrexia	0	1	0	0	0
Infectious jaundice	0	0	14	7	2
Food poisoning	0	0	0	0	0
Undulant fever	-	-	-	-	1

Infectious Diseases notified in 1951. by ages

[illegible]

Infectious Diseases notified in 1951 by month of notification

[illegible]

Infectious Diseases notified in 1951 according to Parishes

Parish	Tuberculosis all sites	Scarlet fever	Whooping cough	Erysipelas	Dysentery	Measles	Pneumonia	Infectious jaundice	Undulant fever
Ashill	1	-	21	1	-	1	2	-	-
Beechamwell	-	-	7	-	-	1	-	-	-
Bradenham E.	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	1	-
Bradenham W.	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Cockley Cley	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Cranwich	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cressingham Gt.	-	8	4	-	-	-	1	-	-
Cressingham Lt.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Didlington	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Foulton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gooderstone	1	-	2	-	-	10	-	-	-
Hilborough	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Holme Hale	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-
Ickburgh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lynford	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Mundford	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Nerborough	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Narford	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Necton	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newton	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oxborough	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pickenham N.	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
Pickenham S.	-	-	7	-	-	4	-	-	-
Saham Toney	-	-	7	-	1	-	1	1	-
Southacre	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Sporle	-	-	26	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stanford	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sturston	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Weeting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	3	9	95	3	1	20	6	2	1

The following Table shows the number of cases on the Tuberculosis Register at 31.12.51 compared with 31.12.50

	<u>Respiratory</u>			<u>Non-Respiratory</u>			<u>Grand Total</u>
	<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total.</u>	<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total</u>	
31.12.50	19	18	37	5	8	13	50
31.12.51	13	16	29	2	3	5	34

I wish to record my thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee. I especially wish to thank the Sanitary Inspector for his unfailing helpfulness.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

ROBERT N.C. McCURDY

Medical Officer of Health

ANNUAL REPORT OF SANITARY INSPECTOR

for 1951

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting for your consideration my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1951

1. RECORD OF INSPECTIONS

Drainage and Sewerage	155
Housing	155
Refuse Collection & Disposal	97
Food Premises	80
Water Supplies	48
Infectious Disease	13
Moveable Dwellings	8
Factories	20
Rat Infestation	61
Milk & Dairies	12
Verminous Premises	10
Miscellaneous	21

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2. COMPLAINTS & NUISANCES

35 visits were made in respect of reported nuisances and in all cases abatement was secured by informal action. These cases in the main related to unsatisfactory drainage and the keeping of animals.

3. HOUSING

4 Statutory Notices were served during the year to secure the repair of dwellings needing attention.

1 Closing Order was made in respect of part of a building from which a family was rehoused in a Council House.

Magistrates Court proceedings were taken in one case to secure the repair of 2 cottages where a Statutory Notice had not been complied with.

Several cottages in respect of which there are Demolition Orders still remain occupied owing to the demand for housing accommodation in the district and for the same reason essential repairs have been carried out to cottages which would normally be condemnable.

4. WATER SUPPLIES

11. samples of water from private sources were submitted for chemical analysis and of these 9 were satisfactory and 2 unsatisfactory.

3 Samples of water from private sources were submitted for bacteriological examination, 2 being satisfactory and one unsatisfactory.

11 samples of water from the Council supplies were submitted for bacteriological examination and all proved satisfactory.

5. DISINFECTION & DISINFESTATION

Disinfection was carried out at 7 houses following cases of infectious disease.

Infestations of fleas were effectively eliminated in 3 cases.

6. FACTORIES

20 inspections of factories within the meaning of the Factories Act 1937 were made and two cases of contravention were discovered which were remedied by informal action.

7. SEWERAGE

No Parish in the District has a proper system of public sewerage. A combined scheme prepared in conjunction with the Wayland Rural District Council for sewerage in the Parishes of Saham Toney and Watton (Wayland R.D.C.) was proceeded with during the year, but owing to difficulties encountered at Saham Toney it is not expected that the scheme will be in operation for some time.

Drainage from houses on the Council's post-war housing sites is disposed of in most cases by means of septic tanks and sub-soil irrigation. This system is not always satisfactory as in some cases the heavy nature of the sub-soil, the high level of sub-soil water or the restricted area available for irrigation renders it difficult to dispose of septic tank effluents and necessitates frequent emptying of the tanks affected. The Council have in operation for this purpose a Cesspool Emptier which is also used to carry out work for private individuals upon request.

During the year⁸²⁴, septic tanks to serve groups of new Council Houses were installed in the villages of Foulden, Hilborough, Narborough, Necton, Newton, Oxborough and Weeting.

8. PUBLIC CLEANSING

During the year the refuse collection service was extended to cover every Parish in the District affording collections at approximately six-weekly intervals. Collection is carried out by contract and has proceeded satisfactorily. Seven pits within the District are used as refuse tips and although controlled tipping in its true sense cannot be carried out due to a lack of covering material, no nuisance has occurred as the refuse collected consists mostly of tins, bottles etc.

9. SHOPS

78 visits were made to food premises during the year and attention drawn to the provisions of the Food & Drugs Act 1939 and the Food Byelaws adopted by the Council in 1950.

Most of the shops in the District are small family businesses of the General Store type with living accommodation attached, and informal action secured improvements in several cases with regard to cleanliness of premises and display of foodstuffs.

5 pounds of cheese was condemned as unfit for human consumption.

10. MILK & DAIRIES

3 Milk Distributors and Dairies are registered under the Milk and Dairies Regulations 1949. Regular inspections have been made and the premises found to be satisfactory.

2 Dealers Licences to sell milk under the Special Designation "Tuberculin Tested" and one for "Pasteurised" have been issued.

11. ICE CREAM

No ice cream is manufactured in the district. 10 shops are registered for the sale of ice cream, this being prepacked and stored in proper refrigerators.

12. MOVEABLE DWELLINGS

3 Licences to station moveable dwellings (trailer caravans) on sites within the district were granted during the year.

13. RODENT CONTROL

A Rodent Control Scheme was commenced during the year for the survey of the district to ascertain the presence of rat infestations and to secure the treatment of infestations found.

For this purpose, 12 part-time operators were engaged who would also act in a private capacity upon request where treatment was found to be necessary.

During the year 11 parishes were surveyed and all cases of infestation found were treated either by the occupier of the property or by the local operator in a private capacity.

Block treatments were carried out at hutted camps administered by the Council at North Pickenham and Weeting.

Yours obediently,

D.B. FOXWELL

Sanitary Inspector

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting the following part of the annual report of the Medical Officer on public health.

1. WATER SUPPLY

Prior to 1951, the Parishes of Weeting, Mundford and Sporle had been given a piped water supply, and by the end of 1951, a piped water scheme had been completed in the Parish of Hilborough.

By the end of the year, in Gooderstone and Foulden work of main laying had commenced, but these village schemes were not completed until the early part of 1952.

In addition, contracts had been let for schemes for the Parishes of Narborough, Cockley Cley and Ickburgh.

The Eastern part of the area comprised of the Parishes of Bradenham, Holme Hale, Necton, Sporle, North Pickenham, Ashill and Saham will be supplied from the Council's new Headworks at Bradenham, water to be supplied to this area to be obtained from two bores of 18 inches and 24 inches diameter. Water from this source is hard and contains sufficient iron to be objectionable, and is thus to be softened and the iron removed by a Permutit Spiractor type plant.

Progress on the construction of this scheme during the year was satisfactory and by December the Headworks were about 80% complete and approximately 23 miles of mains had been laid.

Results of the analyses of raw water from Bradenham are appended to this report.

2. HOUSING

During 1951 the Council completed 51 houses, thus bringing up the total of houses built since the war to 307.

The Council also control 91 converted military hutments, making the total number of dwellings of all types controlled by this Council as 620.

Yours obediently,

E.M. JENKINS

Surveyor

Copy ANALYSIS OF WATER SAMPLE 17th September, 1952

Received from Swaffham Rural District Council,
Swaffham, Norfolk

Source..Borehole..... File No..... Lab.No.49933/I.....
Use..... Date of Sampling.....9.9.52.....

Appearance.. slightly turbid Turbidity.. 11.. pts per million (Silica Scale)

Colour45..... Hazen smell.....Nil.....

All results in parts per million-ppm.

CATIONS	Calcium	Ca.....	pH.....	6.9 ..
	Magnesium	Mg.....	Free Mineral Acidity (FMA) CaCO3.....	
	Sodium	Na.....	Total Alkalinity (Alk.M) CaCO3.....	355...
			Phenolphthalein Alkalinity (Alk.P).....	
ANIONS	Bicarbonate	CaCO3....	355... Free Carbon Dioxide	CO2..... 90...
	Carbonate	CaCO3.....	Silica	SiO2.....
	Hydroxide	CaCO3.....	Iron-Total	Fe..... 3.4 ..
	Phosphate	PO4.....	Iron-in-Solution	Fe.....
			Manganese	Mn..... 0.05..
	Chloride	Cl.....	39... Free Ammonia	NH3..... 0.2 ..
	Sulphate	SO4.....	Albuminoid Ammonia	NH3.....
	Nitrate	NO3.....	Oxygen absorbed 4hrs at 27°C.....	
	Fluride	F.....	Suspended Solids.....	
	Total Dissolved Solids.....		Conductivity..710...Micromhos per cm3 at 20°C	

CONVENTIONAL COMBINATIONS

Silica.....	Magnesium Chloride.....
Iron Oxide.....	Magnesium Nitrate.....
Calcium Carbonate.....	Sodium Sulphate.....
Calcium Sulphate.....	Sodium Chloride.....
Calcium Chloride.....	Sodium Nitrate.....
Magnesium Carbonate.....	Sodium Carbonate.....
Magnesium Sulphate.....	

Hardness Total..388.....	p.p.m. =..27.2..	grains per gallon CaCO3
Hardness Alkaline.355...	" ..24.8..	" " " "
Hardness Non Alkaline 33	" .. 2.4..	" " " "

Grains per gallon = ppm x 0.07
Parts per 100,000 = ppm x 0.1

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